

# **FACT SHEET**

## **TREE REMOVAL AND REPLACEMENT PROJECT (LERP PSYLLID)**

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) will undertake a number of projects over several years projected at \$8 million to remove and replace eucalyptus trees infested by the red gum lerp psyllid insect. The infestation affects the entire state. Caltrans will work to correct the problem affecting local state highway and freeway routes. Removed trees will be replaced with disease resistant saplings and restoration efforts will be made on trees that may yet be salvaged.

Over five thousand trees in Los Angeles and Ventura counties are suffering from this infestation. In the larval or psyllid stage the lerp draws sap from tree leaves and stems. The insect also produces large amounts of honeydew, a sticky clear liquid that stains the ground beneath trees. A blackish sooty mold grows on the honeydew-covered surfaces. There is no effective defense against the lerp at this time.

Only certain species of eucalyptus are attacked by the red gum lerp psyllid. The river red gum eucalyptus is a primary host; the sugar gum eucalyptus is also heavily infested in some locations. The complete host plant range is not yet well known.

The danger of large branches falling from dead trees, putting the public at risk, is also a potential concern. Immediate hazards will be removed by Caltrans maintenance personnel, as necessary, to protect the public.

The tree removals will be divided into individual projects. The first is scheduled to begin in fall 2004 on Interstate 405 from the Orange County line north to the Harbor Freeway interchange through the cities of Long Beach and Carson.

Traffic closures will be minimal. Most work will be done during the day, Monday through Friday. Occasional weekend and night work may be necessary. The public can expect sawdust and noise from equipment.

As space allows, new sapling trees will be planted in proximity to those removed. Mulch will be installed for erosion control where necessary, and modification or repairs will be made to the irrigation systems as needed for the replacement plantings.

For additional information please call Caltrans Public Affairs at 213 897-3656